passing officials where drafts of large amount are paid in cash. Banks have also been advised to introduce a system of sending facsimile copy of the draft issued to the drawee branclvbank.

Budget Allocation for National Waterways

*136. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the plans of Government .to make the National Wateways as a prime mode of transport to and from different corners of the country; and

(b) how much percentage of the total surface transport budget in spent for waterways and what is the same for roadways?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJNATH SINGH): (a) The following three waterways have been declared as National Waterways:—

National Waterway No. 1

The Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly River System (1620 kms) from Allahabad to Haldia.

National Waterway No. 2

The Brahmaputra from Sadiya to Dhubri (891 kms)

National Waterway No. 3

The West Coast Canal in Kerala from Kollam to Kottapuram alongwith Champakara and Udyogmandal Canals (205 Kms)

Schemes have been taken up to provide fairways & other related infrastructural facilities on the above National Waterways.

With the objective of developing Inland Water Transport (IWT) as an important mode of transport, the thrust is on the creation of infrastructure in the form of fairways with adequate depth and width besides the setting up of terminals and navigational aids through the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI). Efforts are in hand to augment the IWT fleet by suitable type of vessels and to ensure adequate cargo support. User Ministries have been requested to reserve 5% of their cargo to be moved through the mode of inland water transport. Considering the huge requirement of investible funds

for construction and operation of terminals, development of fairways, including dredging maintenance of navigational facilities etc., action has also been initiated for evolving policy measures for participation of private sector by extending suitable fiscal and financial incentives.

(b) The details of budgetary provisions for surface Transport and amount spent on roads and waterways during the period from 1997-98 to 2000-01 (upto June 2000) are given in the following table:—

(Rs. in thousands)

Year	Total Budget of Ministry of Surface Transport (excluding Recoveries)*	Amount spent on waterways & percentage		Amount spent on Roads & Percentage	
1997-98	38257300	482800	1.26	28704900	75.03
1998-99	46553400	66500	0.14	27773900	59.66
1999-2000	76635500	521800	0.68	53330100	69.59
2000-01	80977700	165100@	0.20	4846665@	5.96

*Includes both plan and No-Plans provisions Supplementary and Re-appropriation. (g'Expenditure upto June 2000.

Introduction of VRS by the Indian Bankers' Association

*137. SHRI NAGENDRA NATH OJHA:

SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Bankers' Association (IBA) has introduced a voluntary retirement scheme for its employees with a view to cutting its work force by about 50 per cent;

(b) if so, the salient features of the scheme; and

(c) what is the present strength of the employees in the banks and what is the response of the employees to this scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) and (b) Presumably, the reference is to the Voluntary Retirement Scheme for the employees